Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation 709 (1973)[1]

Slaughter methods for meat animals

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having regard to the study by the World Federation for the Protection of Animals on the various methods used in Europe for slaughtering meat animals ;

2. Noting that modern slaughter methods, which spare animals unnecessary pain and suffering, are not yet widely or efficiently used in the member States of the Council of Europe ;

3. Believing that the increasing number of intensively reared slaughter animals calls for more humane slaughter methods and more modern slaughter-houses ;

4. Noting that the causing of fear, distress and pain to animals during slaughter risks impairing the quality of the meat, to the detriment of the interests of consumers ;

5. Believing that not enough scientific research is being done into new methods of stunning slaughter animals before bleeding,

6. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers request member governments :

a. to conclude a European convention on the humanisation and harmonisation of slaughter method s in member States ;

b. to be guided during the preparation of such a convention by :

1. the spirit of the draft convention on animal welfare in intensive rearing, now being drawn up in the Council of Europe ;

2. the following principles :

a slaughter animal should be properly accommodated, fed and watered while being kept for a lengthy time at the slaughterhouse prior to slaughter ;

the brutalising of slaughter animals, and in particular the beating on sensitive parts of their bodies (head, eyes, nose etc.) should be prohibited ;

every slaughter animal should be stunned before being bled ;

stunning should be done by means of a captive bolt stunner or by electricity or gas ;

slaughter-houses should be equipped with the latest technical facilities essential for effective stunning and comply with modern hygiene standards ;

c. to take appropriate steps for the purpose of promoting scientific research into methods of stunning slaughter animals.

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 4 July 1973. See Doc. 3305, report of the Committee on Agriculture.